

**WHAT WE CLAIM IS:**

1. A system for collecting and analyzing electronic discussion messages comprising:

(a) a message collection system in communication with a plurality of pre-determined electronic discussion forums; wherein the message collection system retrieves a plurality of message information from the plurality of pre-determined electronic discussion forums;

(b) a central data store in communication with the message collection system, wherein the message collection system stores the plurality of message information in the central data store for later retrieval; and

(c) a message categorization system, wherein the plurality of message information is categorized according to a plurality of pre-determined rules.

2. A method for collecting and analyzing electronic discussion messages; wherein the method comprises the steps of:

(a) collecting a plurality of message information from a plurality of pre-determined electronic discussion forums;

(b) storing the plurality of message information in a central data store;

(c) categorizing the message information according to a plurality of pre-determined rules;

(d) assigning an opinion rating to the plurality of message information based on a plurality of pre-determined linguistic patterns and associative rules;

(e) collecting a plurality of objective data from a plurality of objective data sources;

(f) analyzing the message information and the objective data to identify trends in the pattern of behavior in pre-determined markets and the roles of participants in electronic discussion forums; and

(g) generating reports for end-users based on the results of the analyses performed by the present invention.

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